

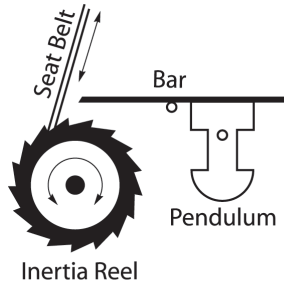
The Safety Belt

How Do Safety Belts Work?

In a collision, a car stops before the riders do. After impact, the people inside that car continue to move in the direction the car had been traveling. One-fiftieth of a second after the car stops, the passengers stop. Without safety belts, they are hurled into the windshield, dashboard, steering wheel, into doors or fellow riders, even onto small children in child restraint seats.

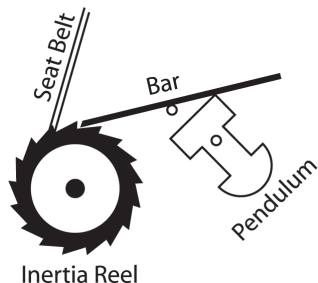
The "second collision" of rider against car interior or other objects is what safety belts are designed so well to prevent, but, **safety belts work only when they are used.**

The shoulder harness of today has an automatic mechanism, which allows the belt's tension to be adjusted for comfort. The lap belt feels best and gives the most protection if it is worn as low as possible across the hipbones rather than across the abdomen.



Normal

Under Normal conditions, the pendulum and bar are in their rest positions. The reel, which holds the belt, is free to rotate. As the occupant leans against the belt, it "gives" or unreels.



Accident

Under accident conditions, such as in a collision, the pendulum tilts toward the force of the impact causing the bar to engage the ratchet. The reel and seat belt now lock, restraining the occupant.

Even pregnant women can comfortably buckle up – and they should. A lap belt worn below the abdomen and a shoulder belt above give both mother and unborn child the best chance of survival in a crash.

People who find they need further comfort adjustments should refer to their owner's manual or contact their dealership for advice. Special belt extenders and other devices can be obtained to handle individual comfort problems.

How Safety Belts Help

In an accident, safety belts keep you where it is proven you are safest, inside your vehicle. This means the vehicle takes the force of the accident – not you.

- In a head-on collision, belts keep your head from going through the windshield.
- In a side collision, belts keep you from going out the side window and being crushed by your own vehicle.
- In a crash involving fire or submersion (less than ½ of one percent of all serious accidents), belts keep you conscious so you can unbuckle your belt and escape quickly.
- In a slide, belts keep you in place and help you maintain control of your vehicle.

Buckle Up For Life

Few people believe they are going to be involved in a collision, but one occurs every eight and one-half minutes in Iowa. No matter how good a driver each of us may be, we cannot predict when dangerous situations may happen on the road. Even on short trips and at law speeds, a crisis can come out of nowhere – a slick road, an erratic driver, a child or animal darting into traffic.

There is no time to put on your safety belt once a collision begins to occur. To protect yourself and your loved ones, BUCKLE UP!

This information is a cooperative effort by:
Iowa Department of Transportation
Iowa Department of Public Safety
Iowa Department of Public Instruction
Iowa Traffic Safety Now

For more information contact:
1-800-532-1121 or (515)244-8725

Iowa's Safety Belt Laws



Effective July 1, 1986, Iowa law (Section 321.445, Code of Iowa) requires drivers and front seat passengers to use safety belts when they ride in a motor vehicle on Iowa roadways.

Iowa's Safety Belt Law

Q. Why was the law enacted?

- A. The law is to protect motorists from needless death and injury, and to reduce taxpayer costs resulting from traffic crashes. Traffic accidents cost Iowa taxpayers more than one million dollars annually for accident-related services. It is estimated that safety belts will save 100-150 lives each year in Iowa, and the number of injuries will be greatly reduced if safety belts are used by everyone.

Q. Who must use safety belts?

- A. The driver and front seat occupants who are 6 years of age or older must use the safety belt which was required by Federal law as standard equipment at the time the vehicle was first sold. Children under 6 are protected by Iowa's Child Safety Seat Law.

Q. To whom is the ticket issued?

- A. The driver and front seat passengers may be charged separately. The owner of a 1966 or newer vehicle may also be charged if the vehicle is not equipped with safety belts, or if the belts are not usable.

Q. What is the penalty for not buckling up?

- A. There is a \$25 fine for each violation. However, court costs will bring the total to more than \$35.

Q. Will a violation go on my driving record?

- A. Yes, but it will not be considered when determining whether your driver license should be suspended, revoked or cancelled.

Q. Can two people be buckled in the same safety belt?

- A. This is a dangerous practice and is not recommended. Safety belts are designed for one person only. In a crash, the lighter weight person could be crushed by the heavier person.

Q. Are there any exceptions as to who must buckle up?

- A. Yes, there are several exceptions:
1. A driver or passenger who must frequently get in and out of a vehicle (such as a delivery vehicle) to perform his/her job, as long as the vehicle is not driven faster than 25 mph between stops.
 2. Occupants of a motor vehicle manufactured prior to 1966.
 3. Bus passengers.
 4. Front seat occupants of emergency vehicles while being transported in an emergency. (The driver is not exempt.)
 5. Rural letter carriers driving between first and last delivery points.
 6. A person possessing a written certification from a physician (on a form provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation) which states the person is unable to wear a safety belt due to physical or medical reasons. The certification must specify a time period not to exceed 12 months. The certification can be renewed at the end of the specified time period, if necessary.

Q. Do non-residents have to buckle up in Iowa?

- A. Yes. All front seat occupants must be buckled up, regardless of their place of residence

Q. What are some of the vehicles covered by the law?

- A. Cars, vans, pickups, motor homes, trucks and buses.

Iowa's Child Safety Seat Law

Q. Who must use safety belts or child restraint systems?

- A. **Provisions of the New Law:** A child under 1 year old and weighing less than 20 lbs must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system. A child under 6 years old must be secured in a child restraint system (a safety seat or booster seat-NOT a seat belt alone). A child from the age of 6 up to the age of 11 must be secured in a child restraint system or by a safety belt.

A "child restraint system" is a specially designed seating system, including a belt positioning seat or a booster seat that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Q. What is the penalty?

- A. Until January 1, 2006 only warning citations may be issued for the new elements of the law listed above. However, misdemeanor citations may be issued if the driver is not complying with these provisions of the old law:

A citation may be issued to the driver if a child passenger is under the age of 3 and not in a child restraint system; or between 3 and 6 years of age and not in a child restraint system or wearing a seat belt; or age 6 or older and not wearing a seat belt while sitting in the front seat

The driver will be issued the ticket or warning. The misdemeanor fine is \$25, plus court costs and is a moving violation. However the fine may be waived if the violator proves an appropriate safety seat or booster seat has been acquired. The law applies to both residents and non-residents of Iowa. The child restraint system must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Q. What are the exemptions?

- A. The law does not apply to children transported in school buses, on motorcycles, or in vehicles built before 1965. The law does not apply to children transported by peace officers on duty or to children transported in an ambulance or other authorized emergency vehicle. A child may also be exempted if a physician has certified that the child should not be secured in a safety seat or booster seat for physical or medical reasons. The law (found in section 321.446, Code of Iowa) was effective January 1, 1985. New provisions listed above were effective July 1, 2004.